

NEWSRELEASE

Montana Department of Corrections • 5 S. Last Chance Gulch
Helena, Montana 59601 • 444-3930 • Fax: 444-4920



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CONTACT: Lisa Grady, 444-4938

Families can now send money to women inmates online

The Montana Department of Corrections has expanded to the Montana Women's Prison its online service that makes it easier for families of inmates to deposit money in the accounts of incarcerated offenders.

The Inmate Trust Account Deposits Service, accessible through a website at <http://inmatetrust.mt.gov>, launched in April 2011 for inmates at Montana State Prison as pilot project. The department said then it intended to eventually extend the service to other correctional facilities.

The service offers another means for pre-approved family members and other individuals to make deposits into accounts from which inmates can use money to buy personal clothing, hygiene products, over-the-counter medications, TV or music player. The service requires depositors to be approved by officials at the women's prison.

"This expansion provides the families and friends of inmates a convenient way to help out their loved ones who are incarcerated," said Jo Acton, warden at the women's prison in Billings. "Sometimes sending a few dollars to an inmate is the easiest way for them to show they care and it's also a morale boost for the inmates. This service truly benefits everyone because it's fast, easy and secure."

Before the online services, inmate family members and others had to submit deposits by mail using money orders. The new trust accounts deposits service saves individual depositors time and money, and the use of credit or debit cards makes it easier to track the source of deposits.

Since its inception, the online banking service has accommodated almost \$95,000 in deposits. During the past fiscal year, nearly \$1.5 million was deposited in inmate accounts statewide.

The application was cooperatively developed and is supported by the Department of Corrections, the Department of Administration and Montana Interactive. The Helena-based company built, operates and maintains the state's eGovernment services that are available through the state's official website (www.mt.gov).

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